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Exploring the moral compass: denunciations in a Facebook carpool group

Rosina Márquez Reiter & Sara Orthaber

With the advent of the internet and social media, car and vanpooling have become easily available alternatives to public transport in many parts of the world. This paper draws on publicly available data from a Facebook car and vanpooling group used by Slovenian cross-border commuters to make their journeys to and from Austria more economically sustainable. It examines public displays of moral indignation following allegations of malpractice by relatively new members whose whole purpose in joining the group was to earn a living from driving vans across borders. Vanpool users collaboratively denounce van service providers for transgressing some of the social responsibilities that ought to bind members of the group together and for their lack of accountability. The accusations which entail exaggerations, complaints, insults and threats, among other hostile verbal attacks, convey moral indignation and are similarly resisted and challenged by the drivers. They offer a window into conflicting behavioural expectations at a time of socioeconomic change and transition. The alleged lack of service van providers' accountability which, in turn, informs the van users' displays of moral indignation is indicative of the moral relativism that emerges as a result of the relocalisation and transforming nature of a contemporary global practice at a time when changes in social life are underway. The primacy of the economic return that vanpooling provides van service providers and cross-commuters with is oriented to by the former as outstripping typical social responsibilities related to the provision of the regulated services, and by the latter, as morally unjustifiable despite acknowledging its economic value.

Keywords: (im)politeness, moral indignation, social media, relocalisation

1. Introduction

With the advent of the internet and social media, car and vanpooling, that is, the sharing of journeys in a car or a van with the objective to cut travel costs and decrease on-going environmental damage, has become an easily available and economically advantageous alternative to public transport in many countries. This is the case in Slovenia where tens of thousands of Slovenians have been reported to work abroad (SORS, 2017, personal communication, 22 November; see, also, Figure 1), predominately in bordering countries such as Austria. For these cross-border migrants (hereinafter called *vanpool users*) vanpooling primarily represents a way of reducing commuting costs and effectively increase take-home pay. Currently, nine percent of Slovenians are reported to be unemployed (Bizovičar, 2016). Those who are employed tend to work in state-owned organisations (e.g. Slovenian railways were the second largest employer in 2015, followed by the Slovenian Post) ("TOP 300: The largest companies in Slovenia", 2015) in the service industry or in industry and construction. Salaries are relatively low, especially in comparison to those in neighbouring countries such as Austria ("Salary Comparisons", 2017).

Following Slovenia's accession to the EU in 2004, the subsequent lifting of restrictions to access the Austrian labour market and the 2008 economic crisis that hit Slovenia particularly hard (Cetinski 2013), the number of Slovenians seeking work across the border has increased dramatically, from just over 4,000 in 2010 to circa 12,000 in 2017 (see Figure 1).

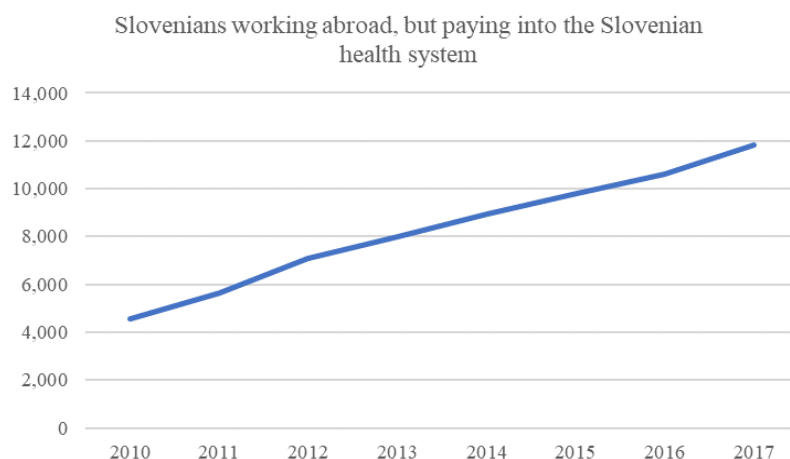


Figure 1: Slovenians working abroad (2010-2017) (SORS, personal communication, 22 November 2017)

Many Slovenians thus rely on the Schengen agreement to cross the border into Austria without any ID controls. Indeed, the Slovenian share of cross-border commuters was amongst the six highest in 2014, representing almost 2% of the employed population (Boot and Wolff 2015). Despite the lack of official figures regarding the total number of commuters in 2014, around 15,000 people engaged in regular cross-border commuting along the Slovenia-Austria border for work or study purposes (The Slovenia Times 2014), particularly from the regions in the north-east which are closest to neighbouring Austria, and in which the unemployment rate is 2,2% above national average (“Registered Unemployment”, 2017). The Austrian press reports that Slovenian citizens represent 32,2% of the foreign workforce in Austria (“Am meisten aus Slowenien. Arbeiter aus EU-Ländern: Österreich auf Platz Vier”, 2017). Given the outdated Slovenian railway system (e.g. Orthaber 2017), inflexible timetables and the long duration of train journeys to and from Austria including their costs (see Figures 2 and 3), many Slovenians have resorted to commuting to and from Austria for work purposes by vanpooling.

Timetable

Ljubljana - Graz - Wien (via Maribor)

Station	IC 514* EC 158	EC 150
Ljubljana	7.58	16.00
Zidani Most	8.47	16.57
Celje	9.08	17.23
Maribor - arrival	9.56*	18.16
Maribor - departure	10.19*	18.19
Spielfeld-Strass (A)	10.36	18.48
Graz Hbf - departure	11.20	19.26
Wien - Meidling	13.55	21.55
Wien - Hbf	14.02	22.02

Notes:

Above times indicate departure times in Slovenia, respectively arrival times at stations outside Slovenia.

*Times in bold type refer to changing of trains. *Train IC 514 operate to 10. June. From 11. June operate train ICS 14.

Figure 2: Timetable of trains Ljubljana-Vienna (Slovenian Railways, 2017)

Fares:

Return ticket	
Standard ticket	
Ljubljana-Wien	146.60
Celje-Wien	123.60
Maribor-Wien	107.60

Figure 3: Standard fares for return tickets (Slovenian Railways, 2017)

A vanpool generally consists of a group of 5-15 people who share a ride in a van. This makes for savings on fuel, vehicle-operating costs, commuting costs and minimises environmental damage. The vehicle is generally owned, insured and maintained by its owner who may not necessarily be the driver. Vanpool members are usually co-workers or people who work in the same vicinity and share driving responsibilities. Each individual vanpool decides their own schedule, pick-up and drop-off points based on the group's needs (e.g. Charles and Kline 2001). The vanpool we examine in this paper is, however, slightly different. It involves a sole driver whose business resides on driving Slovenian workers and students to and from Austria with the primary objective of making a living. The passengers, for their part, are mainly interested in reducing commuting costs and, it is the driver rather than the passengers who decide the schedule, pick-up and drop-off points on the basis of a prearranged schedule and/or Facebook requests (see Section 3, Example C). In most cases, the driver does not have a licence to carry passengers and van users are generally aware of this. In this sense, therefore, the vanpooling context we examine in this paper is illegal. It then follows that any passenger claims are likely to fall onto deaf ears.

Drawing on publicly available data from the Facebook group that connects people who have a free seat in their vehicle with those who are looking for one, we examine instances of hostile verbal attacks against vanpool drivers' alleged malpractices and their concomitant reactions. The paper provides an examination of perceived transgressions of social responsibility and their responses. The latter are oriented to as face-aggravating and unexpected considering the knowingly illegal nature of the practice in contemporary Slovenia. The van service providers' resistance to acknowledge that a transgression of social responsibility has been committed would have clear implications for their livelihoods. It may result in fewer or no passengers in the future rather than in remedial actions on their part, as is typically expected of legitimate businesses. The paper analyses how the van users collaboratively denounce van service providers for not abiding to the normative expectations on which the group was set up and, how these escalate as a result of the drivers' concomitant challenges. The public denunciations observed, and their reactions constitute cases of moral indignation as result of which some van service providers were removed from the Facebook page. The case examined shines light on conflicting moral visions at time of socioeconomic change and transition.

The paper thus examines instances of conflict on social media in the context of a contemporary social practice that has not yet received any discourse analytic attention. In so doing, it draws on and contributes to research on online impoliteness. The first part of the paper provides an overview of previous studies on conflict in offline and online settings. This is followed by contextual information on the data and the analytic procedure employed to analyse representative examples of perceived transgressions before offering concluding remarks in which suggestions for future research are made.

2. Previous studies on conflict in online settings

Conflict in online settings has attracted much attention. This is perhaps the result of the interactive and public nature of "open-posting platforms" (Champoux, Dugree and McGlynn 2012) that disables

the participants from retaining complete control over their self-representation (boyd 2010; Delaney 2008). Online reviews of services, which allow the participants to rate and review one another's contribution in the transaction are one such case in point (see, for example Dayter and Rüdiger 2014, on online complaints in CouchSurfing references; Vásquez 2011, on complaints on TripAdvisor; Vásquez 2014, 2016, on product reviews on Amazon; Hernández-López, forthcoming, on reviews about Airbnb). The examples from the Facebook group presented in this paper resemble the activity type of online reviews. However, Facebook does not afford an automatic bi-directional rating where both the host and the guest can evaluate each other's contributions. Facebook reviews are published without prior intervention from the group administrator regardless of how negative they may be (cf. Dayter and Rüdiger 2014). The affordance (Gibson 1979) of a mutual evaluation system between the host and the guest or a driver and passenger after every trip (as is, for example, the case of the Blablacar network), which often includes a star rating system and comments, has become standard practice in many service-oriented online-based networks and, has been directly linked to the notion of trust or network capital, and linked to the potentiality for remedial actions such as compensation. In this respect, the above-mentioned studies have shown that characteristics such as non-anonymity or the trust capital that accumulates through giving and receiving positive references, have an impact on the way face is interactionally managed by the users and the service providers. For instance, in the case of Airbnb's reviews (Hernández-López, forthcoming), the participants' mutual enhancement of quality face (after Spencer-Oatey 2000, 2008) through rapport enhancement activities such as thanking, complimenting and recommendations were found to be crucial for the maintenance of a positive public self-image. In other words, negative reviews can have implications for the professional face of the service provider (Márquez Reiter 2009; Orthaber and Márquez Reiter 2011, 2016) with clear consequences for its livelihood. Despite the rather ad hoc and illegal nature of the van-driving context examined here, negative comments against van service providers are likely to impact negatively on them, especially when they are competing against each other for users (see Example 1a).

Complaints represent an important element of negative online reviews and can be direct or indirect (e.g. Edwards 2005; Haugh and Sinkeviciute, forthcoming). That is, they can address the entity responsible for the complainable or a third party, both of which can, depending on the situation and affordances of the medium, respond to the complaint, even when they are not personally responsible for the perceived offence (Vásquez 2011; Orthaber and Márquez Reiter 2011). In some online networks such as CouchSurfing, the participants were found to have adapted their complaining behaviour to the implications the complainable event may have for both parties' standing or trust capital in their network. Thus, the complainants tried not to appear as "the complaining type" (Vásquez 2011: 1715; see also Márquez Reiter 2005; Márquez Reiter, Orthaber and Kádár 2015). That is, as someone with a high risk for negative references as this may be used to deny them accommodation in the future, among others. Complaints have thus been observed to include objectifying strategies such as witness corroboration and stories that accord evaluative meaning to consumers' experiences (Sparks and Browning 2010: 803) so as to persuade the audience of the veracity of the complainable event. Also, by framing the complaint as a concern for the well-being of other users, complainants construct an image of a reasonable, tolerant and honest user. Put differently, by displaying an interest in how the audience views them, both complainants and complainees orient towards endorsing one's own positive face, albeit placing more of a concern for self rather than other's face (cf. Hernández-López, forthcoming).

As a discursive phenomenon, conflict is co-constructed in interaction and often contains instances of complaining behaviour. Conflict is "closely tied to the norms of a given social practice and to the diachronic unfolding of specific relationships among individuals who hold divergent worldviews on a particular issue" (Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014: 20). Thus, conflict

represents a discursive (ongoing) struggle over conflicting ideologies based on differing notions of (in)justice (see, also, Janicki 2017). Although the authors' focus was not on the relation between justice and morality, perceptions of injustice typically stem from an understanding of fairness anchored in the moral order that binds people together. This does not preclude the possibility that members of the same culture or group may orient to these differently, especially when they feel that the moral order has been upset, as is the case we examine in this study. Unsurprisingly perhaps, conflictive interactions have been shown to contain a degree of emotional involvement (see, for example, Desivilya and Yagil 2005; Langlotz and Locher 2012) and linked to perceptions of (im)morality insofar as the emotional work that emerges as result reveals the moral orientation of the interactants, and is often linked to evaluations of impoliteness.

Recent studies have drawn attention to the role that morality plays on (im)politeness (see, Kádár and Márquez Reiter 2015 on bystander interventions in face-to-face encounters; Brody and Vangelisti 2016, on bystander interventions in cases of cyberbullying; and Kádár 2017, on ritual, impoliteness and morality). In online contexts such as Facebook groups, administrators often play an important role as an intervener. They have the power to delete textual comments or block certain users to reinforce the moral order. According to the Facebook help centre, the administrator is the only one with rights to remove or block a member from the group and thus has the role of an executor. To re-join the group, removed members must send a new request to join. Blocked members, on the other hand, are unable to find the group using the searchability or see any of its content. However, if a member decides to leave the group or is removed from the group, his or her comments will remain. In other words, the texts that the interactants publish, whether privately or publicly, are “persistent-by-default, ephemeral-when-necessary” (boyd 2010: 46). As the analysis will demonstrate, this is an important issue (see Example 1b).

The public, polylogical and often anonymous nature of many online settings represent fertile ground for the occurrence of moral indignation (Garfinkel 1956) where violations of the moral order often occur. Moral indignation “is a social affect” (Garfinkel 1956: 421; cf. Langlotz and Locher 2012) and may be seen as a form of shaming that aims to make the wrongdoer – in our case the van service providers – feel guilt for their past actions or for having violated the normative expectations of a social group – in our case those that bind the members of the vanpooling group together. The Facebook group examined thus provides the ripe conditions for the collaborative construction of public denunciation when members of the group feel that transgressions of the moral order have occurred. In the case analysed, public denunciation becomes moral indignation as redressive action beyond the removal of members from the group is unlikely to take place. Public denunciation is displayed in the way in which the van users (implicitly) accuse and in some cases name and shame van drivers (Example 2a) for the lack of accountability that such services ought to entail. Such degradation ceremonies undermine the perpetrators' professional face by embarrassing them publicly, while at the same time help to strengthen group solidarity (Garfinkel 1956: 421) among van users. Group solidarity is especially important in this context. Many of these students and workers are away from home, cut off from friends and families and thus often develop an emotional attachment with those in a similar situation. The paper argues that the moral indignation that the denunciations analysed are indicative of the moral relativism that the relocalisation of global practices brings about in a society undergoing socioeconomic change and transition.

Given the negative effect denunciation may have on the wrongdoer's professional face with clear implications for the sustainability of its business, interactants tend to avoid putting themselves in such positions or situations (Delaney 2008). Van service providers (in this case the alleged transgressors) tend to avoid admitting fault as this is likely to impinge negatively on their much-needed livelihoods.

3. Background and methodology

The data for this study were collected from a Facebook group, which enables one-to-many text-based *quasi*-asynchronous communication between participants (Meredith 2014). Facebook groups allow members to “assemble a semi-public audience” (Androutsopoulos 2014: 6) consisting of individuals with similar interests, yet different social traits and role relationships. The group we focus on brings together Slovenians who study or work in Vienna, Austria, and commute to/from Slovenia on a weekly or monthly basis. The group page was set up as a non-profit carpooling page in 2010 by a student to help students repeatedly secure cheap travel to and from home. It currently has over 8,800 members and one administrator, who describes the group’s main purpose as follows: “*The group is dedicated to all, especially students studying in Vienna who are faced with issues like how to get home and back on a weekly basis. The group was designed as a non-profit website with the aim to cut transport costs for both drivers and riders [...]*”. In line with other Facebook groups, rules of appropriate behaviour are expressed in imperative form and/or authoritative modality (Culpeper 2011). Such rules are part of the moral order of a particular group, that is, they indicate how people ought to behave: “*I reserve the right to remove from the group anyone who violates the basic principles of this group! The students who offer rides are encouraged also to include the information about the fare, for van drivers this is a must!!!*” This post clarifies the fact that the passengers pay an agreed sum towards the driver’s costs. Given that cars in large cities like Vienna are an expensive hindrance (i.e. private car costs 15 times more than public transport, (Christiaens 2014)), many Slovenians working there decide against owning a car. However, there are only two direct trains between Vienna and Slovenia a day. These run at inconvenient hours (see Figure 2).

The journey by train takes between 4 to 6 hours and costs up to five times more than car or vanpooling. In view of this, ride sharing seems to be the best alternative. The basic idea is that ride seekers profit in terms of journey costs and duration by contributing a small amount of money to the drivers (between 10-13 Euros), in the case of carpooling. In the case of vanpooling, the fare is typically higher (15-20 Euros). The travel time for a 250 to 300-kilometre distance takes approximately three hours. The group is public. This means that anyone can join. The language of communication in the group is Slovenian. In the group, car drivers have access to two fluid roles: (1) the host who offers a ride or (2) the rider or fellow passenger.¹ Van drivers, however, only have the role of service providers. By posting a request (see Example A) or an offer for a ride (see Example B), members coordinate rides with each other and they most often do so in the form of private messages. While requests and offers represent the largest part of activities on these Facebook interactions, occasional sharing of relevant news (i.e. delays in real time) and experiences with service providers or others also occurs. These messages are posted in a semi-public environment in front of ratified group members (Goffman 1967), who can decide to participate actively or not by posting their own comments or reacting to the comments made by others in the group. This means that when reading the posts, group members are likely to possess a certain amount of background knowledge, which helps them understand the relevance of the information that is being shared.

Example A – Request for a ride

Hej! Gre kdo v četrtek po 16:30 z Dunaja v MB?

Hi! Is anyone going from Vienna to MB on Thursday after 16:30?

Requests for a ride typically include departure and destination points and an approximate (desirable) time. Users offering rides, on the other hand, are also encouraged to include information such as the cost of the fare.

Example B – Ride offer (group member)

¹ By fluid we mean that although they are typically the driver (and car owner) offering a lift to others, on some rare occasions they may also be the ones looking for a ride.

Hej! Danes, 31.8. peljem Dunaj - Maribor ob
16:00. Start U3 Erdberg. EUR 10

Hi! I'm driving from Vienna - Maribor today,
31.8. at 16:00. Departure at U3 Erdberg. EUR
10

Importantly, when posting offers and requests, members (are encouraged to) orient to an aspect of the affordance of the technology, that is the difficulty in ascertaining the time and date when the comment was posted. The provision of exact dates is used as a time stamp to disambiguate 'today'. This is because the ledger does not automatically display the exact date and hour of the post. To establish the time stamp, the enquirer would need to have the post ID and then query `graph.facebook.com/<postID>`. This should return a JSON array of properties, one of which is the `created_time` value. It returns a time stamp in this format - 2010-11-27T16:34:28+0000.

Example C – Ride offer (van service)

petek 24.11. peljem:
ob 9:00 LJ- CE - MB - Dunaj
ob 16:30 Dunaj - MB - CE - LJ
MB in CE 15 eur
LJ 17 eur

Friday, 24.11. I'm driving:
at 9:00 LJ- CE - MB - Vienna
at 16:30 Vienna - MB - CE - LJ
MB and CE 15 eur
LJ 17 eur

By continuously using and/or offering van-sharing services drivers accumulate trust. Trust develops from past positive user experiences resulting from the quality of the service such as reliability, safety, and friendliness (cf. Dayter and Rüdiger 2014). As more and more Slovenians started working in Austria, demand started to outstrip supply despite the fact that group members offering rides did not travel the distance on a weekly basis.² This was spotted as an opportunity by some people, who started to offer rides on a daily basis on different carpooling platforms including this group in order to make a living. In the light of the supply/demand imbalance, offers from the newly emerging van service providers were accepted by the group. Group members seeking rides, however, quickly worked out that van service providers charge more than what used to be standard practice when sharing a ride with the people who have their own car. In this sense, therefore, they were seen, by some established group members, as contravening normative expectations. However, in one of his comments from 2014, the administrator of the group argued: *"no one is forcing anyone to take the van transport... if you feel the contribution is too high, ignore the offer and choose a better one. I'm sure, however, that a more expensive van ride is convenient when there are no other options, right?"*

Many van service providers perform this service illegitimately, that is, they do not have a license to carry passengers. This allows them to avoid paying value-added tax and costs associated with vehicle licence and safety regulation (e.g. to safeguard driver and vehicle standards, passenger insurance) that other passenger transport service providers (e.g. buses, trains, registered van services) are required to pay. In a recent response to the group discussion about van services from February 2017, the administrator wrote: *"I created this group as a student for students... when I created it, I didn't have a clue that in the end professional drivers would be so eager to become group members with the aim to make money or fill empty seats"*. This comment was triggered by the fact that some van drivers, when responding to requests, failed to disclose that they are van service providers, as more and more users started avoiding them. This was possible given that Facebook does not afford a peer rating system when it comes to such arrangements. The affordance of the rating system is seen as an important digital trust tool, in that mutual evaluations, after sharing a ride together, significantly increase the level of trust within the carpooling community and the credibility of the service.

² According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (2017), 15.572 Slovenians emigrated in 2016, of which 27 percent moved to Austria.

To optimise their rides, some van service providers took on maximum number of passengers, making long-distance travelling uncomfortable and further contravening health and safety regulations. In addition, to fill their car seats they take on passengers travelling shorter distances. According to passengers' complaints, this seems to have resulted in sudden changes in departure time, additional stops, delays, and prolonged journey times for those travelling longer distances. It has led to much uncertainty among users, who felt the need to report and discuss any major violations on the group's platform to prevent others from experiencing the same. As a result, some group members started to clearly state in their requests that van service providers should not contact them (see Example 4).

Example 4 – Request for a ride

Iscem prevoz v petek 6.10 iz Mb do Dunaja.
Kombi ne pride v postev!

I'm looking for a ride on Friday 6.10 from
Mb to Vienna. A van is out of the question!

The nature of their interaction is primarily transactional. Users offer rides to complete strangers based on no more shared background than their group membership without verifying each other's identity. Although some group members may also know each other offline, connections such as the ones in this setting have primarily online-offline directionality (cf. Dayter and Rüdiger 2014; Hernández-López, forthcoming). Moreover, all being abroad in a foreign country, cut off from friends and families, many group members have developed an emotional attachment (cf. Berger 1996; Herring 2008), a sense of togetherness, trust, and personal responsibility to display solidarity with each other in online disputes (see Section 4). These interactions took place at the time when illegal vanpool drivers seized a niche in the market. The intermittent availability of legitimate vanpool services created a space in the market for van drivers whose sole purpose is to make a living out of transporting cross-border commuters. For these drivers, this represented a much-needed vehicle for occupational mobility during the economic crisis and its aftermath. However, this meant that they would be competing with non-profit vanpool users. Importantly, the former are seen by established group members as contravening normative expectations anchored in the moral framework in which the group was set up.

The dataset comprises 17 interactions, in which conflict erupts following users' reporting of an alleged transgression made by illegal van service providers. The interactions took place during 2011 to 2017, yielding up to 60 comments per posting. In total, there are 441 entries, i.e. comments and replies to comments (roughly 27.000 words), to which 149 different group members contributed.³ In nine instances, group members urged the administrator to block specific users, i.e. service providers, and in three cases the alleged perpetrator was removed from the group (see also Examples 1a and 1b). The relationship between both sides is quasi-asymmetric, in that they both benefit from each other's presence, at least theoretically speaking. The service providers need passengers to cover their expenses and avoid operating at a loss, whereas the passengers need the service providers to reach their destination at a reasonable price and at a reasonable time.

The examination of the data is approached from an interactional discursive perspective, informed by research on conflict and (im)politeness. Special attention is paid to the way in which face and (im)politeness emerge in the social practices the interactants engage in. The analysis draws on Goffman's notion of face (1967) and Garfinkel's (1956) notion of moral indignation and incorporates elements of Conversation Analysis to capture how displays of moral indignation are negotiated and managed interactionally.

4. Analysis and discussion

³ When posting a comment, group members can click either on the "reply to" button to respond directly to the commentator before them (in the data, these are indented to the right) or on the general "post a comment".

Out of the 17 interactions, in this paper we focus on four interactional instances from two conversations in which reports about perceived transgressions and their reactions are oriented to in the form of moral indignation. The paper observes how the escalation of verbal attacks regarding transgressions leads to overt conflictive behaviour and, in one instance, results in the removal of one van service provider from the Facebook group. The first conversation (Examples 1a and 1b) features an indirect complaint that deals with poaching customers and offers a threat to other drivers and a warning to users. It categorises the practice and those who engage in it as dishonest both with respect to the users and to other drivers, thus contravening the moral order of how services ought to be operationalised. In the second example (Examples 2a and 2b), van service providers are publicly denounced following an incident where a van user was left stranded at a train station in the late evening hours. In most cases the complaints relate to breaching the rules of the group such as conducting different kinds of business practices in a non-profit group and to generally inappropriate behaviour. In these interactions, most van service providers are characterised as wrongdoers insofar as they are depicted as using people to “make a quick buck”, without providing a proper service. The users, for their part, adopt an identity of a victim and build an alliance with each other against the drivers.

Example 1a

The interaction starts with an indirect complaint (Edwards 2005) from one of the van service providers, Peter Schwarz, about other van service providers in which he urged passengers to check the identity of the drivers prior to entering any vehicle.⁴ Peter constructs the complaint through accusations, warnings and threats, expecting some sort of remedial action: either from the passengers, i.e. to check the identity of the driver, or from the drivers themselves, i.e. to stop poaching passengers by threatening to make their names public. Although doing so is unlikely to have any legal repercussions, negative word of mouth could damage other drivers’ business. The example shows that Peter’s post triggers a moral turmoil within the group. Following a public disclosure of his inappropriate behaviour (Example 1b), the conflict ends with wrongdoer’s removal from the group. The post yielded 15 comments by six different people, of which one is the service provider, i.e. Peter, whereas the others are (potential) van users.

01	Peter Schwarz	POMEMBNO OBVESTILO:
02		Prosim, če lahko potniki preverijo indetitetu (naročilo
03	2 June 2016	prevoza) šoferja, ker nekateri šoferji ne upoštevajo
04	at 00:20	svojega poštenja do potnikov/šoferjev in prevzemajo druge
05		potnike od drugih šoferjev in se predstavijo pod lažnim
06	9 comments	imenom in stem povzročijo zmedo med potnikom, šoferjem oz
07		kompletno rezervacijo prevoza.
08	8 likes	Hvala na razumevanju!
09		PS: Naslednjič objavim imena in telefonske od nepoštenih
10		šoferjev!

*IMPORTANT MESSAGE:
If passengers could please check the identity of the driver (booked ride) because some drivers are dishonest towards the passengers/drivers and take on other driver's passengers and go by a false name and create confusion between passengers, drivers and the entire booking.
Thanks for your understanding!
PS: next time I'll post names and phone numbers of dishonest drivers!*

11	Vito Lah	Ta je pa dobra. Itak sesuvate bistvo car poolinga in z
12	9:21	vašimi kombiji onemogočate navadnim voznikom redukcijo

⁴ Personal names and names of places mentioned in the data have been altered.

13	10 likes	prevoznih stroškov. Zdej naj pa potniki še identiteto
14		šoferjev preverjajo, da ja ne boš ob svoj zaslužek? Kaj
15		če bi se vi kombijaši to sami med sabo zmenili? Nekje
16		drugje.

That's a good one. You're destroying the point of carpooling with your vans, preventing ordinary drivers from reducing their travel costs. And now the passengers should check the identity of drivers so that you won't lose your income? Why don't you, the van drivers, sort this amongst yourselves? Somewhere else.

[...]	[...]	[...]
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At line 01, Peter characterises his post as an important message using capital letters to grab the attention of the audience. He formulates his message in the form of an announcement, i.e. as a request directed at the passengers, whom he addresses using third person plural exclusive form *preverijo* (“check”). At line 03, he topicalizes the perceived unfairness of drivers, accusing (Trosborg 1995) them of acting immorally given the dishonesty that is associated with business poaching practices. This is further intensified in his post scriptum, where he utters a direct threat to go public with the names. The remedial action to which his contributions are oriented are based on the moral order but do not necessarily attend to the behavioural expectations on which the group was constituted. There would be no need to check the driver’s identity if s/he were a fellow cross-commuter as honesty and trust were some of the foundational values on which the group was set up. In threatening to post the real names of the poachers, Peter orients to the moral order insofar as he shows, that unlike them, he is not a ruthless.

The first one to respond is a user named Vito, who reacts negatively to Peter’s post (line 11) as observed by his response cry (Goffman 1981) *ta je pa dobra* (“that’s a good one”), with which he rejects Peter’s complaint on the basis of the moral foundation on which the group was built: a non-profit group. He then attacks Peter’s and other van service providers’ professional face by not only assigning blame for the current state of affairs to them, thus ‘putting them in their proper place’ (Kádár 2017), but also accusing them for taking their carpooling page hostage. This, in his view, is irreconcilable with Peter’s competing motivation. By suggesting that van service providers sort this conflict among themselves and outside this group, at lines 15-16, he not only categorises van service providers as out-group members (e.g. “you, the van drivers” at line 15), but also explicitly tries to strip them of their ratified participation status (e.g. “somewhere else” at lines 15-16). In other words, Peter’s plea for van users’ solidarity has fallen on deaf ears. Here, we can observe moral relativism, whereby the van service provider moralises the behaviour of other service providers (e.g. poaching customers) and seeks solidarity with van users, who, in turn, moralise the service providers’ breach of expectations, especially their profiteering on the backs of van users’ needs.

Example 1b (continuation of 1a)

[...]	[...]	[...]
36	Primož Kovač	Dragi kombi prevozniki. Ko boste štartali TOČNO ob uri,
37	14:47	ko boste za pot Dunaj-Lj porabili 3 1/2 - 4 ure (ne 5 in
38	4 likes	6....), ko bodo kombiji vsakokrat ČISTI, ko bo VSAKOKRAT
39		izstavljen račun, ko vaši šoferji ne bodo popolna DRHAL,
40		takrat pa lahko piskate o poštenosti in fair igri.

Dear van drivers. When you'll start ON TIME, when your ride Vienna-LJ will take 3 ½ - 4 hours (and not 5 or 6...), when the vans are CLEAN every time, when EACH TIME a receipt is handed over, when your drivers are not complete ASSHOLES, then you can bang on about fairness

and fair play.

- 41 Peter Schwarz Ni ti to knjiga pritozbe....pritozi se
42 15:03 direktno...z mano se nisi vozil...
- This is not a book for complaints....complain directly...you didn't ride with me...*
- 43 Primož Kovač
44 15:05 Niti ni to tvoj poligon, kjer se boš pizdakal.
2 likes In namesto, da se kurčiš, se raje drži pravil.
- This is also not a platform where you can talk smack. And instead of being a prick, stick to the rules.*
- 45 Primož Kovač hvala za to lepo sporočilo
2 likes
- thanks for this kind message*
- 46 Peter Schwarz
47 THU 15:08
48 Pusi kurac mamu ti jebem
49 klosaru jedan da ti jebem
50 mater slovensku
- Suck my dick I fuck your mother
you homeless bastard I
fuck your
Slovenian mother*
- 51 Maja Kramar in ta naj bi ceno stanke ma dej sam do kesa jim
52 4 June 07:55 je s takimi tud varni nismo
1 like
- and this one is supposed to appreciate customers, come on they are in it for the cash, we're not safe with them*
- 53 Tjaša Vindis Admin a lahko odstranite uporabnika, ki odkrito grozi in
54 10:22 žali ostale.
2 likes
- Admin can you remove the user who publicly threatens and insults others.*
- 55 Primož Kovač Ni blo odkrito, preko sporocila je blo. Ampak vseeno
56 10:31 delim to lepo komunikacijo z vami...
- It wasn't done publicly, it was a private message. But I wanted to share this nice communication with you...*
- [...] [...] [...]
- 66 Damir Ferk Peter Schwarz je izbrisan. Imamo še kake "junake brez
67 17:21 bontona"?
- 3 likes
- Peter Schwarz has been removed. Do we have any other "heroes with no manners"?

At lines 36-40, a group member called Primož also verbally attacks the van service provider and, like Vito, generalises the issue to all van service providers as is evidenced from the way he addresses them (e.g. "dear van drivers") and from his use of the second person plural (e.g. *ko boste štartali* ("you^{PL}ll start") at line 36). In the narrative, Primož lists the normative business practices that van service providers do not comply with and culminates his contributions with an insult. That is, he voices the moral order associated with the way van services are to be provided. He does so through the use of "metalexic evaluators" (Kádár 2017: 21) ("when your drivers are not complete ASSHOLES" at line 39) and invokes differences in the perception of fairness and fair play through exaggeration. His use of insults (e.g. line 39) is destined to be interpreted negatively and become open to evaluations of

impoliteness. Shortly after, Peter replies directly to Primož's comment (lines 41-42) in an explicit and unmitigated manner. Peter highlights Primož's lack of entitlement to complain as he was not one of his passengers and, implicitly conveys his own understanding of the main role of the group: to connect passengers with drivers (see Section 3). This helps Peter to distance himself from the pool of unaccountable van service providers, contest the earlier treatment he received as an out-group member and treat Primož's complaint as unwarranted.

The grounds of Primož's complaint are paradoxically similar to Peter's inasmuch as they both orient to expectations of good business practices based on fair trading standards. Although commercial standards are enshrined in the law, they are knowingly not observed by either party. While cross-border commuters acknowledge their participation in unlawful business practices with a clear health and safety risk out of economic necessity, they orient to the van service providers' complaints as morally unjustifiable. Van service providers were allowed to join the group to increase the supply of cross-border private transport at a time of high demand (see Section 3). This enabled them to earn a living at a time of socioeconomic recession. However, some of the practices such as charging higher fares and making unscheduled stops to increase returns, are seen as profiteering on the back of cross-commuters' subsistence needs. They are irreconcilable with the main *un pour tous, tous pour un* principle on which the Facebook group was formed and thus morally punishable and with the economic principle of allowing for-profit drivers to join. Peter's response, in turn, is met with an intense negative reaction by Primož. This is seen in his hostile counter attack in which he conveys moral indignation. His counter attack mirrors the utterance grammatically, albeit with the addition of "also" (cf. lines 41 with 43: "this is not" and "this is also not") and with the addition of profanities (e.g. the use of swearwords such as *pizdakal*⁵, *se kurčiš*⁶). Put differently, by appealing to the rules imposed by the group (line 44), moral sanctioning is invoked (e.g. Culpeper 2011). However, what seems to give rise to a set of aggressive, negative reactions by other group members is a discrepancy between the van service providers' and the cross-commuters' perceptions of accepted rules of right and their concomitant social responsibility they accrue.

Peter, the service provider, does not respond. Shortly after, however, Primož shares a snip, i.e. a screen capture that Peter had sent to Primož as a private message (see lines 46-50; see also lines 55-56), which he accompanies with a sarcastic comment (line 45). It includes the sender's name and the time the message had been sent (lines 46-47) and is followed by the profane, threatening message in Serbo-Croatian. It is noteworthy that especially obscene and profane curses and swearwords used in contemporary Slovenian had been borrowed from other languages, in this case the Serbo-Croatian language as the effect is stronger (Nežmah, 2011). Peter's inclusion of 'Slovenian' before 'mother' constitutes a double metapragmatic articulation. It is a put down of Primož as a passenger and as a Slovenian. It positions Primož as subaltern relative to Peter who is potentially not Slovenian but possibly Serbian, Croatian or of Serbo-Croatian descent. In the light of such profanity and direct ethnic discrimination that serves to add insult to injury, Primož publicly denounces it by sharing the post.

The sharing is oriented to destruct the wrongdoer (the van service provider) and reinforce solidarity among vanpool members who are by the most Slovenian. Two days later a female user, Maja, replies directly to Primož's comment and passes a moral judgement, which she extends to his professional relationship with van users. She addresses the transgressor indirectly using a pronoun *ta* ("that one") and then switches to first person plural *nismo varni z njimi* ("we are not safe with them"), thus invoking the "us versus them" rhetoric by adopting the first person plural form "we" (exclusive of the van service provider), building a coalition with fellow service users against van service providers (Bruxelles and Kerbrat-Orecchioni 2004). In light of this, Tjaša, another group member, appeals to the administrator and his power to remove the van service provider from the group (lines 53-54). In publicly threatening and insulting a group member, the van service provider's behaviour is constructed as morally reprehensible, beyond the foundational values on which the group was established. Although Primož explicates the reasons for having shared the private message with the audience (lines 55-56), a further appeal to the administrator is made, who is the only one with powers to intervene by removing the van service provider from the group (lines omitted). Following this, a

⁵ The verb "pizdakati", derived from the profane word "pizda" (a cunt), means to complain about something or someone.


⁶ Similarly, this vulgar expression, which contains the word *kurac* (a dick, a prick), means "to get agitated or upset with someone".

few hours later, the administrator informs group members that Peter had been deleted from the group (see, also, lines 65-66). With the removal of the transgressor, this particular conflict has been resolved inasmuch as remedial action has been taken.

Examples 1a and 1b demonstrate how Peter, a van service provider, is collaboratively denounced by van users following his appeal for solidarity in light of business poaching practices. Following Peter's attempt to ward off the van users' overall dissatisfaction with van services through denials and counter-attacks, users display moral indignation against him. The moral indignation arises from Peter's invoking of the normative business behaviour that other providers should abide by. In so doing, Peter takes the moral high ground himself, a position that according to the users stands in contrast with the way van services are operationalized. Through destructive discursive activities such as exaggeration, grammatical and lexical mirroring, use of insults and putdowns (e.g. "assholes", "being a dick"), accusations and threats (e.g. calls for removal from the group), Peter is cast as a transgressor. He is constructed as someone who does not meet the necessary conditions (e.g. charging higher fares, offering a substandard service without acknowledging receipt of money) to occupy the morally right 'hill'. Given that Peter refuses to accept any responsibility for the alleged malpractices of the collective of service providers in which he is included and the fact that no remedial action can be taken against him by the van users, public denunciation in the form of moral indignation is the only means van users have at their disposal to express righteous anger. Impoliteness emerges in the way the dispute is fought out publicly, i.e. in a face-aggravating, hostile manner through threats, insults, and accusations. While the impolite behaviour of Peter as an out-group is publicly castigated, van users' inconsiderateness and abuse of Peter as a transgressor is accepted by group members. It is used as way to vent righteous dissatisfaction, and as a resource to maintain and restore the foundational values on which the group was formed, i.e. the moral order. (cf. Dynel 2012; Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014, where anonymity was said to be one of the main factors that creates fertile ground for the frequent occurrence of impoliteness). One of the reasons for this may lie in the fact that the conversational topic is not an abstract or ideological one, but rather that the alleged malpractice by the van service providers may have severe and immediate real-life consequences for the users, e.g. losing lives due to dangerous driving. As a result, the commentators tend to treat each contribution on van service providers' seemingly inappropriate behaviour as newsworthy and display moral indignation against them as this is the only thing they can do in light of a pervasive unregulated service.

Excerpt 2a

The interaction starts with a request posted by a female member of the group named Anja (lines 01-03). On reading her post it becomes clear that the message was sent in real time and that Anja, together with someone else, was left stranded by the van service provider at a train station in Vienna. She deems the offence so thoughtless that she decides to share it with the whole group, presenting herself as the victim. The distress she presents in her post is bound to elicit responses from other group members that are likely to align with her needs. Indeed, the post received 16 comments and emotive emoji⁷ with which van users publicly denounce the van service providers.

01	Anja Palčič	2h cakam na Hauptbahnhof in verjetno prevoza ne bo. ce se
02	8 July 2016	najde kdo k pelje dons v Slo nej se javi rabila bi prevoz
03	21:14	za dve osebi. Hvalalala
	16 comments	
	4 likes	<i>I've been waiting at the main train station for 2h and the ride is probably not coming. if anyone is going to Slo today let me know I need a ride for two. Thankyouyou</i>
		
04	Pia Pika	Tudi nas prijatelj je danes ostal brez prevoza. Mislim,
05	9 July	da bo potrebno v skupini objaviti crno listo in v njej
06	00:06	vse telefenske stvilke ali prevoznike, ki so ne
07	9 likes	zanesljivi ter kot zadnje case se dogaja, da pot do

⁷ These are used to visually emphasise a point of view without necessarily commenting. A crying face, therefore, constitutes a hurt reaction to the news, whereas a pouting red face conveys anger with a person or a situation (Danesi 2016).

08 Dunaja in obratno traja vec kot 6 ur. Prevozniki se
09 morajo zavedati, da imamo vsi obveznosti in vložiti malo
10 vec resnosti v svoje delo, ce se zeliyo ukvarjati z
11 rednimi prevozi.

Our friend also got stood up today. I think a black list will have to be published in this group with all the phone numbers or service providers who are unreliable and as happening lately rides to Vienna and back take more than 6 hours. Drivers must realise that we all have commitments and become more serious at what they do if they wish to provide transport services.

12 Ma Ko Kateri prevoznik je zahinavu?
00:14

Which service provider was a no show?

13 Anja Palčič Bom javla takoj k vem razlog oz pojasnilo kaj se
14 00:17 je zgodil..k mogoce je bla pa nesreca..

I'll let you know as soon as I learn about the reason or get an explanation of what happened..maybe it was an accident..

15 Anja Palčič Ze pet let iscem prevoze na tej strani in se strinjam.
16 00:15 Sploh ni vec isto kokr je blo, vcasih si se zmenu do lj
17 2 likes in smo bli v 3,5h v lj za 15€ in to je blo to pa se fino
18 smo se mel. Bistvo je blo pridt od tocke A do tocke B z
19 najmanjsimi moznimi stroški(za vse), ne pa tko kt dons k
20 se gre sam za dobick pa tut ce to pomen da se ustavimo na
21 vsaki crpalki al pa mestu na poti do Lj...OBUP!! Nikol se
22 nism prtozvala ampak tole se je pa zdj ze 2x zgodil in
23 vse ma svoje meje 😞😞😞😞😞😞😞

I've been booking rides on this site for the past five years and I agree. It's not what it used to be, back then you'd go to lj and you were there in 3,5h for 15€ and that was that and we had a good time. The point was getting from A to B with lowest possible costs (for all), not like today when it's all about profits even if that means we stop at each gas station or town on the way to LJ...DISASTER!! I've never complained but this has happened twice now and there's only so much one can take 😞😞😞😞😞😞😞

24 Ma Ko Se popolnoma strinjam s Pio. Objavit je potrebno crno
25 00:21 listo! To je slo ze cez vse meje!!
2 likes

I agree completely with Pia. We need to post a black list! This is way out of order!!

33 Vladka Mar O katerem vozniku je govora?
18:43

Which driver are we talking about here?

34 Anja Palčič Aleš Vodnik in zo ni blo prvic samo s tem da je prvic po
35 18:44 2,5h cakanju voznik le prsu, uceri se ga je pa na ceskem
36 napil in ni prisel!

Aleš Vodnik and this is not the first time, just that the first time he came after 2,5h, but yesterday he got drunk in the Czech Republic and didn't show up!

37	Ma Ko	Ta je tudi mene je... u glavo, se na konc zdru
38	10 July	name, kot da sm js kriva da je zamuju 1 uro,
39	00:49	brez da bi koga obvestil! Na koncu je peljal kot
40	1 like	nor, cez polno crto itd... Oprosti, moje
41		zivljenje je vredno vec kot 20€ tko da z njem
42		nikoli vec!!!

This one also fu.... me, and then also yelled at me as if it's my fault that he was 1 hour late, without any notice! In the end he drove like crazy, over the full line and so on... Sorry my life is worth more than 20€ so never again with him!!!

A few hours later, a group member Pia objectifies Anja's complaint by presenting corroborating evidence (Wooffitt 1992; see also Sparks and Browning 2010). She draws on external resources to the current account (Dayter and Rüdiger 2014) by including her friend's exact same experience from that day. She then calls for blacklisting unreliable service providers, justifying her action on the providers' repetitive breach of norms and expectations with regard to how a professional transport service should be conducted. Despite van drivers being members of the same group, she casts them as out-group members (e.g. third person plural address forms). Such actions may be seen as displays of emotional support for Anja, the initial poster who was left cut off from friends and family while abroad. Despite calls by other group members to publicly reveal the transgressor's identity, Anja refrains from doing so to give the driver the benefit of the doubt. In doing so, she not only attends to the potential negative repercussions to driver's professional face, but also to her own face. Anja presents herself as a morally just person who will not jeopardise the driver's trust capital before the facts for the transgression can be established. This helps Anja to maintain her credibility in the light of an accusation made by her prior commenter Ma Ko (cf. Vásquez 2016). Around the same time (lines 15-23), Anja also reacts to Pika's comment (lines 04-11) by engaging in an evaluative metapragmatic activity of complaining. She uses the first-person narrative and script formulations (e.g. each gas station, this has happened twice)⁸ with the focus on prior experience. On the one hand, Anja tries to present herself as a tolerant person who only complains when offences occur repeatedly (e.g. lines 22-23). On the other hand, because the transgressions seem to occur repeatedly, she sees it as her duty to inform the rest of the group on the basis of the solidarity.

At lines 24-25, the commentator Ma Ko makes a reference to what the prior reviewer had written about the "black list" ("I agree with Pia"). A recent study of online reviews demonstrated that such references indicate that, before posting their own contributions, many reviewers read what others have posted in the same review space and that this allows them to contextualise their own opinions. (Vásquez 2016). However, here it is also used to express solidarity with Pia. At line 25, she also provides a metapragmatic evaluation of the providers' business practice as unacceptable by posting a comment *to je šlo že čez vse meje* ("this is way out of order"), which is accompanied by exclamation marks to communicate affect (Georgakopoulou 2004; see, also lines 36 and 42). Users also communicate affect by using capital letters (e.g. *OBUP* "DISASTER" at line 21; see also Example 2b, line 71). Finally, at line 34, the post initiator, Anja, shares the van driver's identity and the reason for the not showing up, i.e. the driver got drunk, thus constructing his behaviour as morally reprehensible. By emphasizing the repetitive nature of his irresponsible behaviour, she aims to present herself in a positive light as a tolerant person (cf. line 22) who acts for the good of all. Nevertheless, the sharing is oriented to destruct the wrongdoer (the van driver) and reinforce solidarity among vanpool members in that by knowing who the transgressor is, she is protecting them from having to endure what she did. Upon learning about the service provider's identity (at lines 37-42) another member reacts by corroborating Anja's story based on her prior experience with the same provider in the form of a narrative using (e.g. "he yelled at me"; "drove like crazy"). She concludes with a moralising metacommunicative comment "my life is worth more than 20€", implicitly accusing the driver of cruelty in endangering people's lives.

⁸ According to Dayter and Rüdiger (2014: 205), interactants, on the one hand, use script formulations to justify their perception of the event as complainable. On the other hand, they use them present themselves in a positive light, while also portraying someone else's behaviour in the negative light.

In what follows, a female user Vladka reacts to the initial poster's complainable with a direct appeal to the moderator to remove unreliable providers from the group. Moreover, she is responding directly to the first commenter, Pia, by tagging her (e.g. line 45). Like the majority of other comments, her contribution is interactionally designed (e.g. *wh*-question at lines 73-74) and embedded in the surrounding stretch of discourse.

Excerpt 2b (continuation of 2a)

45 Vladka Mar Ne samo, da se podpisem pod komentar od [Pia Pika](#),
 46 apeliram na moderatorja te skupine, da take voznike
 47 odstrani iz skupine!
 48 20:20 Pustimo ob strani dejstvo, kaj je bil prvoten namen te
 49 4 likes trznice prevozov, ker zdaj so očitno drugi casi. Poserem
 50 se na prosti trg in ponudbo in povprasevanje, ce se gre
 51 nekdo s prevozi biznis, naj se gre, ampak naj bo zadeva
 52 fer!
 53 Sama prevoze uporabljam redno ze / sele stiri leta in v
 54 zadnjem (recimo) letu dni, mi grejo ti kombi prevozniki
 55 ze posteno na jetra! Dobre izkuznje imam samo z dvema, pa
 56 ju ne bom imenovala, da me ne bo kdo obtozil, da komu
 57 delam reklamo. To kar se dogaja zadnje case na relaciji
 58 Dunaj - Slovenija, je obupno. Punca je zvečer na
 59 Hauptbahnhofu dve uri cakala na prevoz, ki ga ni bilo, pa
 60 kaj ste normalni? Sprijaznila sem se ze s tem, da do
 61 Maribora za 10 evricev peljejo redki, jbg, se vedno dam
 62 raje 15 € nekemu kot pa da se cijazim z vlakom, ampak
 63 taka neresnost in norcevanje iz ljudi, ki v končni fazi
 64 za prevoz placajo, je sla tukaj cez vsako mejo. Vcasih ko
 65 se prek fejsa dogovarjas za prevoz sploh ne ves vec ali
 66 gre za privat ali kombi ponudbo.
 67 Jaz za prevoz do Slovenije placam. Vse kar pričakujem je,
 68 da pridem v normalnem casu od tocke A do tocke B. Ne
 69 rabim, da me voznik med potjo zabava, ne rabim wifija, ne
 70 rabim sendvica in Pingo soka, samo do doma bi rada
 71 prisla. In to, da nekoga, KI S PREVOZI SLUZI (ne gre se
 72 za privat prevoze, da se razumemo), nekje cakas pa se na
 73 koncu niti ne prikaze, je absurdno. Zakaj bi pustili, da
 74 si taki amaterji delajo kes na nas?

I don't just sign under the comment by Pia Pika, I urge the moderator of the group to remove such drivers from the group!
Leaving aside the initial objective of this carpooling site, it's obvious times have changed. I shit on the free market and the supply and demand, if someone is doing a transport business let them, but be fair!
I've been using transport services for four years already/only and over the past (let's say) year these van drivers have been pissing me off! I only have good experience with two of them, and I'm not gonna name them, cause then someone will accuse me of promoting them. What is going on on the route Vienna Slovenia is horrendous. The girl's been waiting at the main train station for two hours for the ride that didn't show, are you normal? I've come to terms with the fact that hardly anyone takes you to Maribor for 10 euros anymore, I rather pay 15€ than take the train, but this non-seriousness and making fun of people who at the end of the day pay for the service is beyond me. Sometimes when you're arranging a ride over Facebook you don't even know if it's a private person or a van.
I pay for the ride to Slovenia. All I expect is to get from point A to point B in reasonable time. I don't need the driver to entertain me, I don't need wifi, a sandwich or juice, I just want to get home. And the fact that

someone who MAKES MONEY WITH TRANSPORT SERVICES (not private users obviously), and you wait for them somewhere and they fail to show up is absurd. Why allow such amateurs to make money of us?

76 Aleš Vodnik [Anja Palčič](#) ali lahko prosim napises tako kot je bilo res
77 10 July oz. kdo je peljal?
13:17

[Anja Palčič](#) can you please write the way things happened or who was the driver?

At lines 47-52, Vladka, like several other commenters (e.g. Excerpt 1a, line 11; Excerpt 2a, lines 07-10; 15-20) topicalises the behavioural expectations on which the group was constituted, corroborating this evaluation with the fact that she has been using these services for the past four years. Her first-person narrative contains external evaluation (Labov 1972), that is, the actual message (i.e. taking action against unreliable van drivers, e.g. lines 46-47; 73-74) as well as internal evaluations such as dramatization of what had occurred (e.g. “the girl’s been waiting at the main train station for two hours for the ride that didn’t show, are you normal?”). With this, van drivers are cast into a particularly negative light. Repetition (e.g. “doing transport business”, “makes money with transport services”, “pay for the service”), tense shift (between past and present tense), factual details (10€, 15€), emotionally charged words (e.g. “I shit on the free market”; “van drivers are pissing me off”; “are you normal?”; “making fun of people”; “it is beyond me”; “amateurs”; “is absurd”) are some of the insults and exaggerated details that Vladka uses to confirm factuality and to signal that she understands such behaviour as a breach of social norms and expectations regarding how the service in its most basic form should look like. In her comment, Vladka dwells on the implications of globalisation and provides a moral evaluation of the van drivers’ services, showing neither interest nor understanding for their circumstances, labelling them as people who profiteer on the backs of those that have no option but to use their services. With this, she invokes differences in the perception of fairness and fair play with regard to how the service that, in the end, is paid for is carried out.

Two days later the alleged driver addresses Anja directly (by tagging her), asking her to tell what really happened and who was responsible without explicitly denying involvement in the incident. However, the fact that no further comments were added, indicates that the passengers are not interested in hearing the other side of the coin, particularly when this may result in the diminishing of the service provider’s social responsibility. In a similar vein, the van driver does not pursue the matter further, most likely not to risk being removed from the group. Given the lack of uptake from other group members, especially Anja, the conflict remains unresolved (cf. Bou-Franch’s and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014) and the events that trigger moral indignation elicit negative emotions such as anger and contempt (cf. Langlotz and Locher 2012). Van users’ contributions are thus oriented to venting their anger in terms of the direction to which the moral compass should point, irrespective of where the magnetic north is attracted to other magnetic fields such as the socioeconomic conditions that saw non-professional drivers become van service providers.

Unlike the previous conversation (Excerpts 1a and 1b), this interaction does not contain open conflict between service users and providers. Nonetheless, public denunciation is achieved through displays of moral indignation against the van driver(s). These include the co-occurrence of various linguistic devices that make up the complainable, such as witness corroboration, script formulations, first-person narratives, exaggeration (repetition, emotionally charged words, tense shift), orthography (exclamation marks, capital letters). Using these resources, group members publicly denounce all van driver(s) and their way of doing business as morally reprehensible given that they contravene the foundational values on which the group was originally set up. In the conversation, users orient to and expand on what prior group members have posted when commenting (e.g. Example 2b, line 45: “I don’t just sign under Pia’s post”; Example 2a, line 15: “I agree”) and thus build solidarity with each other. Both examples show that the van users use Facebook as a platform to express their dissatisfaction with the van service providers. The displays of moral indignation observed indicate conflicting moral visions at a time of social change. This is expressed by Anja in her metapragmatic assessment (lines 48-74) of the consequences of the way vanpooling has been embedded under the specific socioeconomic conditions of the Slovenian locale, bringing with it inevitable changes in the

foundational values on which the practice was originally conceived. On the one hand, van users expect for-profit van drivers to abide by the rules of group such as charging a flat rate and making fewer stops. However, the inevitability of driving a van for profit means that rates need to be increased and further stops made. In the few cases when the drivers' position is taken into account (as in example 1a), expectations of fair trading standards are invoked despite the unregulated and illegal nature of the practice that both drivers and users knowingly engage in.

5. Concluding remarks

The article looked at cross-border commuters' displays of moral indignation against van service providers, who offer transport services between Vienna and Slovenia on an informal Facebook carpool group. The examples analysed capture a particular moment in time where Slovenian social life is undergoing transformation following a new socioeconomic reality. On the one hand, we have young Slovenians who moved abroad to (find) work but commute home on a regular basis using services that allow them to increase the home-pay return. On the other hand, we have van transport services that people started to offer in order to meet the demand of the recent cross-border migration trend and make a living. Following a number of complaints about van drivers published on Facebook over the recent years, van users increasingly started to view their business practices as controversial (e.g. higher fares, making additional, unannounced stops, providing unreliable services). Given the unregulated nature of the practice, van drivers cannot be held accountable. Thus, users challenge them by invoking the moral order that ought to bind members of the group together, van drivers and users alike, in an effort to restore the normative behavioural expectations and resist further changes in the market conditions. We have seen how the moral indignation conveyed by van users results from what they see as the van service providers' resistance to abide by the norms on which the group was set up, norms which dictate what is morally right in this social group. And, how from the point of view of the drivers, the users are reluctant to embrace the inevitable transformations that higher demand for cross-border transport services brings. Van users thus collaborated and formed a coalition with each other, treating van drivers as out-group members. Through evaluations of morality, that is, displayed perceptions of (in)justice which result from conflicting moral visions of the current socioeconomic situation, van drivers were depicted as ruthless profiteers and demonised.

The relocalisation of vanpooling involves the disembedding of localised ideas and relations, mostly of North American provenance, and their re-embedding in a specific locale. Such relocalisation entails the emergence of new identifications, alliances and struggles for power within an impoverished Slovenia where many of its citizens have to find work outside its borders. It also involves the operationalization of the service through an online platform that does not afford the possibility to review services in a bidirectional manner (cf. Couchsurfing, Blablacar, and the like). This inevitably contributes to the lack of accountability of service providers and users alike and, minimises the chances of remedial action beyond the removal of members from the group.

We have seen how the re-establishment of vanpooling in the cross-border commuting context examined involves conflicting visions of morality. In the case of our data, alliances between cross-border commuters (students and workers alike) who were not necessarily familiar with each other were created as a result of their struggles for socioeconomic livelihood in a Slovenia under economic crisis through the affordances that online platforms such as Facebook provide. Based on 'local' knowledge of how non-for-profit services ought to work, including the values on which non-for-profit services should be based (e.g. honesty, reliability, equal gains for drivers and users), cross-border commuters actively attempt to come to grips with deteriorating economic conditions in their locale: the need for further vanpooling supply as the number of cross-commuters increases and, thus the unavoidable acceptance of individuals who would join the group for profit purposes. Although the latter are welcomed as they represent a further means of continued subsistence for cross-border commuters, their joining fundamentally transformed some of the foundational values of the way the practice was originally relocalised and what it stood for, such as a sense of community, integrity, trust and good stewardship. In accepting individuals to join the group for profit, albeit knowing that they did so to make a necessary living too, under difficult socioeconomic circumstances, the moral order in

which the group was originally established, and the practice embedded in the specific Slovenian context, was further transformed. Such transformation was met with resistance. This was observed by the multiple realities and values that were invoked by the Facebook participants, van drivers and users alike.

We have discussed how the behaviour of some for profit van drivers was seen as morally reproachable in so far as the increased value of journeys was not commensurate with typical expectations of service. Van service providers were thus seen as contravening the moral values of fair play such as justice, fairness and dignity. Importantly, they were also seen as acting against the basic principle of solidarity that ought to exist between cross-border commuters who are cut off from home family and friends and use this platform as a means of extending their safety net while abroad. The drivers for their part invoked moral values at a different plane. One such level was the external circumstances of van driving poachers. They thus appealed to van users to seek solidarity and understanding as well as to change some of the ways in which the practice is performed such as doing identity checks. This, however, fell onto deaf ears, as the basic moral values of honesty and trust on which the group was initially set up were not attended to. We have thus witnessed how the relocalisation of a global practice and its on-going transformation due to socioeconomic conditions generates conflicting visions of morality where cross-borders commuters and drivers fight over the risks that arise when fundamental changes associated with uncertainties relating to external development and the volatility of the economy are underway. Such circumstances require the fine-tuning of the moral compass.

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